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ABSTRACT

A mail survey of 790 parochial school teachers and 350 public elementary school teachers in San Francisco (California) and two adjacent counties was conducted in the 1987-88 school year to ascertain the teachers': perceptions of media use by students; use of media in the classroom; and educational goals for their students with regard to media. A total of 373 questionnaires was returned for a response rate of 33%. Among the respondents, 198 were considered media active and 175 were counted as "less active". The respondents generally had 5 or fewer years of teaching experience; they were less experienced and generally younger than the average teacher in their school systems. Teachers rated television as the medium most used by students, followed at a great distance by video/computer games, movies, and radio. Teachers were most likely to use personal computers as media in the classroom. Over two-thirds of the teachers considered that students spent too much time using media. Teachers generally considered students quite competent in the operation of most consumer-oriented media equipment, but considerably less than competent in media understanding skills. About two-thirds of teachers reported teaching about media as part of another subject. Between 25% and 33% of the respondents had discussed the role of media in society or the role of advertising with their students. Most of the teachers (86.6%) would have liked to teach about the media more often, but barriers included lack of time and lack of materials. The results highlight the need for more and improved media education materials. Survey results are presented in 21 tables. The survey instrument is included. (SLD)

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MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION NEEDS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: A SURVEY

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A mail survey of 373 parochial and public elementary school teachers in San Francisco, California and two adjacent counties, was conducted by Strategies for Media Literacy (SML) in the spring of the 1987-88 school year to ascertain their perceptions of media use by students, their use of media in the classroom, and their educational goals for their students in regard to media.

The survey, funded by the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, is considered the first step in the design and development of a media literacy curriculum for students in grades one to six. By better understanding how teachers currently use media and how they would like to use it, SML believes it can build on current practices and focus curriculum design in ways that would enhance adoption of the curriculum by classroom teachers and curriculum decision-makers.

Teachers participating in the survey generally had five or fewer years teaching experience. This fact made them less experienced--and presumably younger--than the average teacher in their school systems.

Perceptions of Student Media Use

Teachers in the study ranked television as the medium most frequently used by students, followed at a great distance by video/computer games, movies and radio. Over two-thirds of the teachers believed students spent too much time using media.

Teachers considered their students quite competent in the operation of most consumer-oriented media equipment, but considerably less competent in media understanding skills such as choosing media content, analyzing program values or limiting media use.

Media Use in the Classroom

About two-thirds of the surveyed teachers reported teaching about media as part of another subject while one in eight currently teaches media as a subject in its own right. Over one-half of the teachers have introduced media studies through spontaneous discussion in the classroom, over one-half use print media as part of their students' assignments, and over one-half use technical equipment to teach about media. However, only about one-quarter to a little over one-third of the teachers have discussed the role of media in society or the role of advertising with their students.

The majority (86.6%) of teachers would like to teach about the media more often, and more than one out of every five would like to teach media education as its own unique subject. Barriers to increasing the amount of media education include lack of time and lack of materials. Well over one-half of those teachers who teach about the media create their own teaching materials.

Media equipment to support media studies is widely available, particularly videocassette recorders, television monitors and personal computers. Equipment to help students create their own media materials, such as video cameras and photography labs, is considerably less available.

Most teachers use personal computers in their teaching several times a month. They are likely to use audio recorders, TV monitors, newspapers and videocassette recorders at least once a month.

Goals for Media Education

When asked what it is important for students to understand about the media, teachers were most likely to emphasize the educational function of the media, its ability to be a "window on the world." Also considered highly important is the need for critical thinking skills such as how to question media content, to think about why content is presented in a particular way, and how to recognize values embedded in media content.

Teachers' ratings of the usefulness of time spent with various media to students' education is high, reinforcing the positive evaluation given to media by teachers.

Based on the findings from the survey, it is clear that there is a need among many teachers for more and better media education materials. Materials should be stand-alone, designed for flexibility so they can be used by themselves or incorporated into other subjects, multi-media in nature, and easy-to-use with detailed teaching instructions and lesson plans.

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Special thanks are due to Robert Harrington at the San Francisco Unified School District and to Susan Hahn at the Archdiocese of San Francisco who provided access to the schools and teachers within their jurisdictions. Without their help, collecting the data would not have been possible.

Last, but scarcely least, we'd like to say a resounding word of thanks to the teachers who took the time and effort to complete the survey questionnaire.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Executive Summary	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Tables	vi
Introduction	1
Methodology	1
Data Collection	1
Data Analysis	2
The Sample	2
Results	3
Perceived Use of Media by Students	3
Media Use in the Classroom	6
Goals and Values for Media Education	11
Discussion and Recommendations	15

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
TABLE 1:	Years of Teaching Experience Among Sample Teachers	3
TABLE 2:	Distribution of Grades Taught by Elementary Teachers	3
TABLE 3:	Teacher Ranking of Student Media Use	4
TABLE 4:	Teacher Perceptions of Student Time Spent in Media Use	4
TABLE 5:	Parochial/Public Teachers Compared on Amount of Student Media Use	5
TABLE 6:	Mean Rankings of Student Media Equipment Competencies	5
TABLE 7:	Mean Rankings of Student Media Understanding Competencies	5
TABLE 8:	Parochial/Public Teacher Ratings of Student Media Understanding Competencies	6
TABLE 9:	Teachers' Evaluation of Students' Media Understanding Competencies by Grade	6
TABLE 10:	How Teachers Address Media in the Classroom	7
TABLE 11:	How Parochial/Public Teachers Address Media in the Classroom	8
TABLE 12:	Teachers' Reasons to Teach Media Less Often	8
TABLE 13:	How Teachers Would Like to Address Media in the Classroom	9
TABLE 14:	Perceived Barriers to Media Education	9
TABLE 15:	Sources of Media Education Materials	10
TABLE 16:	Availability of Media Equipment	10
TABLE 17:	Frequency of Media Equipment Use	11
TABLE 18:	Important Things for Students to Understand about Media	12
TABLE 19:	Goals for Media Education by Type of School	13
TABLE 20:	Goals for Media Education by Teachers' Media Activity	14
TABLE 21:	Teacher Ratings of Media Usefulness to Education	14

INTRODUCTION

In May 1988, Strategies for Media Literacy (SML) surveyed teachers in public and parochial elementary schools in San Francisco, CA to ascertain their perceptions of media use by students, their use of media in the classroom, and what they thought it was important for students to understand about media.

The survey, funded by the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, is considered the first step in the design and development of a media literacy curriculum for students in grades one to six. By better understanding how teachers currently use media and how they would like to use it, Strategies for Media Literacy believes it can build on current practices and focus curriculum design in ways that would enhance adoption of the curriculum by classroom teachers and curriculum decision-makers.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

A mail survey of public and parochial school teachers was undertaken in May 1988 by Strategies for Media Literacy. Enough copies of the survey form were mailed to principals at each of 70 schools in the Archdiocese of San Francisco with a request that they be distributed to all teachers in the school. Ten copies were mailed to principals at each of 70 elementary schools in the San Francisco Unified School District with a request that they be distributed to the five teachers whom the principal considered "most likely to respond."

The survey form was designed as a stamped self-mailer and teachers were asked to mail it back to SML after they completed the instrument. As an incentive to respond, SML offered a complimentary issue of the SML newsletter to teachers who responded. Teachers were also able to place their name on the SML mailing list for an ongoing free subscription.
One follow-up mailing was sent to principals at 30 schools in the Archdiocese where response rates were lower than average.

Assuming principals followed the written survey instructions, a total sample of 1,140 teachers was surveyed. Of these, 790 were parochial school teachers and 350 were public school teachers.

A total of 373 questionnaires was returned to SML for a response rate of 33 percent.

Data Analysis

The survey instrument consisted primarily of closed-ended items. A few open-ended question were content-analyzed for typical responses and a coding structure developed for the range of responses uncovered.

The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). After examining the frequency distributions for each item, two new variables were created. The first classified teachers on a scale of media activity, i.e., the number of ways teachers addressed media in the classroom. Teachers were classified as active media users if they incorporated media into their classroom instruction in more than four ways, since four was the median number of ways teachers reported they used media. For example, an active media user might report she taught media as a formal subject in itself, through assignments using TV or radio, through spontaneous discussion of advertising, through discussion of general TV viewing, and through the use of technical equipment in the classroom. In contrast, a less active media user might report only one of those strategies.

Among teachers in the sample, 198 were considered media active, while 175 were counted as "less active."

The responses of active media users were compared with those of their less active peers on a number of key variables to examine differences between them. Such differences may help target the design of and integration with the rest of the curriculum, as well as dissemination of the media literacy curriculum materials to be developed.

In addition, responses of parochial and public school teachers on some items were compared. Whenever comparisons were made between parochial and public school teachers or between media active and less active teachers, a chi square test of significance was conducted. Where significance levels are reported in this report, they are based on the chi square statistic, unless otherwise noted.

THE SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 373 elementary school teachers. The typical respondent was a female (87.9% of the sample) who had been teaching for three to five years (52.3%). Equally likely to teach in a public (51.2%) or parochial school (48.8%), she most likely taught a class in first through fifth grade.

This respondent profile contrasts sharply with the average San Francisco Unified School District teacher who is 48 years old and has 18.7 years of service. The average length of service for teachers in the Archdiocese of San Francisco is estimated to be about ten years. Responding teachers are less experienced than average and, presuming age correlates with length of service, younger than average.

Table 1 shows the length of service profile of the sample, while Table 2 displays the distribution of grades taught by teachers in the sample.

TABLE 1
Years of Teaching Experience Among Sample Teachers
(N=373)

2 years or less	19.8%
3-5 years	52.3
6-10 years	27.9

Well over one-half (58.7%) of the elementary school teachers included in the survey taught in the primary grades of Kindergarten through the 3rd grade (Table 2).

TABLE 2
Distribution of Grades Taught by Elementary Teachers
(N=324)

Kindergarten	11.4%
1st	16.1
2nd	17.0
3rd	14.2
4th	13.9
5th	19.8
6th	7.7

RESULTS

The survey addressed three broad domains: perceived use of media by students, media use in the classroom, and perceived goals for media education.

Perceived Use of Media by Students

Questions within this domain addressed teachers' perceptions of their students' media use and competency. Questions included the frequency with which various media was used by students; judgments about the appropriateness of student time spent with the media; and teachers' evaluations of students' mastery of a number of media literacy competencies. For the study, media literacy was considered to have two components. One was competency in equipment use and the other was competency in understanding media, including the ability to regulate the amount of time spent in media, distinguishing fact from fiction in media content, etc.

Table 3 shows the mean ranking of each medium, as teachers perceived their use by students, where 1 means "most often used."

TABLE 3
Teacher Ranking of Student Media Use

	Mean Ranking
Television	1.20
Video/Computer Games	2.86
Movies	3.70
Radio	3.86
Records	4.25
Magazines	5.30
Newspapers	5.96

As seen in Table 3, the electronic media clearly dominate the print media. Television was clearly ranked as the medium used most often by students, with 88.7% of teachers ranking it tops with their students. Video and computer games were ranked second, with over one-half (52.5%) of the teachers ranking it first or second choice. Movies ranked third, with 50.3% of teachers ranking it first, second or third while radio ranked fourth, with 45.6% of teachers ranking it first, second or third choice. Fifth in popularity was records, with 58.4% of teachers ranking it third, fourth or fifth. Sixth was magazines, with 75.9% ranking it fifth, sixth or seventh, while newspapers ranked last with 82.4% ranking it fifth, sixth or seventh.

Over two-thirds of the sample (68.9%) believed that students spent too much time with the media. One in five (18.6%) thought just the right amount was spent, while one in eight (12.5%) thought not enough time was spent by students using media. Table 4 displays these findings.

TABLE 4
Teacher Perception of Student Time Spent in Media Use
(N=344)

Too Much	68.9%
Right Amount	18.6
Not Enough	12.5

The instrument did not allow teachers to specify which media they would like students to spend more or less time with, nor which functions of the media could use more time by students (e.g., news). Instead, it addressed only the total amount of time spent.

Parochial school teachers (92%) were more likely than public school teachers (83.3%) to say students spent too much or just the right amount of time. More public school teachers (16.7%) than parochial school teachers (7.9%) were likely to say students spent too little time with the media. These differences, shown in Table 5, are

statistically significant.

TABLE 5
Parochial/Public Teachers Compared on Amount of Student Media Use

	Parochial (N=164)	Public (N=180)
Too Much	70.7%	67.2%
Right Amount	21.3	16.1
Not Enough	7.9	16.7

p = .0358

Teachers in the sample ranked students as quite competent in operating media equipment such as television, radios, record players, etc., but rather less competent in media understanding skills such as analyzing program values or distinguishing program content from ads. Tables 6 and 7 show the mean competency ratings for a number of media-related skills on a scale where 1 is highly competent, 2 is somewhat competent, 3 is slightly competent, and 4 is not competent.

TABLE 6
Mean Rankings of Student Media Equipment Competencies

Using Equipment	Mean Ranking:
Using TV	1.38
Using Radio	1.57
Using Tape Recorder	1.68
Using Record Player	1.73
Using VCR	2.15

TABLE 7
Mean Rankings of Student Media Understanding Competencies

	Mean Ranking:
Distinguishing Contents & Ads	2.55
Distinguishing Content & Reality	2.63
Identifying Values	2.86
Choosing Media Content	3.03
Analyzing Program Values	3.05
Limiting Media Use	3.34
Creating Media Content	3.40

TABLE 8
Parochial/Public Teachers' Ratings of Student Media Understanding Competencies

	Highly Comp.		Somewhat Comp.		Slightly Comp.		Not Comp.		Signif.
	Paroch.	Public	Paroch.	Public	Paroch.	Public	Paroch.	Public	
Choosing Media Content	1.8	.5	29.2	15.9	52.6	45.6	16.4	37.9	.000
Creating Media Content	2.4	.6	15.2	5.1	41.2	30.3	41.2	64.0	.000
Limiting Media Use	.6	0.0	15.7	7.8	47.1	37.2	36.6	55.0	.003
Analyzing Pgm Values	2.9	.6	29.8	15.6	48.5	41.7	18.7	42.2	.000
Content vs. Reality	10.5	3.3	40.4	36.7	41.5	37.2	7.6	22.8	.000
Content vs. Ads	15.2	7.8	43.3	28.9	34.5	42.8	7.0	20.6	.000
Identifying Values	7.6	2.2	40.4	14.4	40.4	50.0	11.7	33.3	.000

TABLE 9
Teacher Evaluations of Student Media Understanding Competencies by Grade

	Highly Comp.		Somewhat Comp.		Slightly Comp.		Not Comp.		Signif.
	K-3	4-6	K-3	4-6	K-3	4-6	K-3	4-6	
Choosing Media Content	1.7	0.0	11.4	31.1	44.9	53.8	42.0	15.2	.0000
Creating Media Content	1.2	0.8	6.4	12.5	28.3	43.0	64.2	43.8	.0082
Limiting Media Use	0.0	0.0	8.6	12.3	33.1	52.3	58.3	35.4	.0006
Analyzing Program Values	0.6	1.5	11.0	31.8	44.2	46.2	44.2	20.5	.0000
Content vs. Reality	1.7	9.2	35.6	41.5	37.9	41.5	24.7	7.7	.0000
Content vs. Ads	8.7	11.3	20.2	48.1	46.8	35.3	24.3	5.3	.0000
Identifying Values	1.2	6.1	15.6	36.4	50.3	41.7	32.9	15.9	.0000

Thus, while teachers rated students as "somewhat" to "highly competent" in using media equipment (Table 6), they rated students as only "somewhat competent" to "incompetent" in understanding the media. Students were judged more competent in distinguishing program content from ads and in treating dramatic program content as fictional than they were in limiting media use or in creating media content for themselves.

Teachers in parochial schools consistently judged their students to be more competent in media understanding skills than did public school teachers, as seen in Table 8.

Similarly, there were significant differences in teachers' evaluations of students' media understanding competencies by student grade level. Students in the primary grades (K-3) were judged to be considerably less competent than students in the intermediate grades (4-6). These results are shown in Table 9.

Media Use in the Classroom

Teachers were asked how they addressed students' media use in the classroom, how they would prefer to address it, barriers to incorporating media education into existing classroom practices, media equipment availability and frequency with which media equipment is used. This section reports the results of these items.

TABLE 10
How Teacher Address Media in the Classroom

As Part of Another Subject	66.2%
Through Spontaneous Discussion	56.6
Using Newspapers/Magazines	54.2
Using Technical Equipment	51.5
Discussing General TV Viewing	43.4
Using Television or Radio	38.3
Discuss Role of Advertising	37.5
Discuss Role of Mass Media	26.3
As a Formal Subject	12.9
Do Not Address Media	6.2

At the present time, only one in eight (12.9%) teachers in this sample teaches media studies as a formal subject in itself; almost two-thirds, however, (66.2%) teach about the media as part of another subject. Over one-half (56.6%) report that they find themselves teaching about media during spontaneous discussions with their students.

Teachers reported they were more likely to teach media using print media, such as newspapers and magazines (54.2%), than they were using television or radio (38.3%). Interestingly, over one-half (51.5%) addressed media through the use of technical equipment in the classroom.

The media topic most often discussed was general TV viewing (43.4%), followed by the role of advertising (37.5%) and the role of the mass media in society (26.3%). Only 6.2% of the teachers said they did not address media at all in their classrooms.

There were statistically significant differences between parochial and public school teachers in the media topics discussed and in how media lessons were taught. Parochial school teachers were twice as likely (35.2% compared to 17.8%) as public school teachers to discuss the role of the mass media in society with their students and considerably more likely (45.1% compared to 30.4%) to discuss the role of advertising. Further, parochial school teachers were far more likely (48.9% compared to 28.3%) to teach media through using television or radio than were public school teachers. Table 11 displays these comparisons.

TABLE 11
How Parochial/Public School Teachers Address Media in the Classroom

	Parochial	Public	Significance
Discuss Role of Mass Media	35.2%	17.8%	.000
Discuss Role of Advertising	45.1	30.4	.004
Assignments Using TV or Radio	48.9	28.3	.000

Moreover, when teachers are asked if they would prefer to address media use more or less often in their teaching, a resounding 86.6% said they would like to address it more often. Only 13.4% said they would address it less often.

Those teachers who would like to address media less often than they do now are most likely to say they have insufficient time (7.2%) than for any other reason. Table 12 displays these findings.

TABLE 12
Teachers' Reasons to Teach Media Less Often

Prefer to Teach More Often	86.6%
Prefer to Teach Less Often	13.4
Insufficient Time	7.2%
Lack Materials	2.7
Not Appropriate Topic	2.7
Feel Incompetent	.8
Children Too Young	.5
Low Priority	.3

Table 13 shows how teachers who would prefer to increase the frequency with which they address media in the classroom would prefer to do it.

TABLE 13
How Teachers Would Like to Address Media in the Classroom

As Part of Another Subject	65.3%
Using Newspapers/Magazines	59.6
Using TV/Radio	47.4
Through Spontaneous Discussion	46.0
Using Technical Equipment	40.3
Discuss Role of Advertising	30.1
Discuss General TV Viewing	28.5
Discuss Role of Mass Media	27.5
As a Formal Subject	22.9

Almost twice as many teachers (22.9% compared to 12.9% [Table 10]) would like to teach media as a formal subject than do currently do so. More than one out of every five teachers responding to the survey would like to incorporate media studies as a formal part of the curriculum.

Nearly two-thirds (65.3%) would like to incorporate media studies into their teaching on other subjects. Over one-half (59.6%) would like to use print media to teach about the media while almost one-half (47.4%) would like to use electronic media.

The most significant barriers for most teachers to incorporating more media education into their classroom activities are lack of time (64.6%), lack of teaching materials (47.2%), lack of equipment (26.8%) and lack of teacher training (20.4%) so teachers feel competent addressing media issues. Table 14 shows these findings.

TABLE 14
Perceived Barriers to Media Education

Lack of Time	64.6%
Lack of Materials	47.2
Lack of Equipment	26.8
Lack of Training	20.4
Admin. Objects	1.1
Parents Object	.8

When asked where they obtained media education resources, most teachers responded "Myself"--so it is no wonder that lack of time and materials are the single

most important barriers to incorporating media education into the classroom. Other sources of materials include district media centers, newspaper agencies, librarians, textbook companies and community groups, as seen in Table 15.

TABLE 15
Sources of Media Education Materials

Myself	55.0%
Media Ctr	30.3
Newspaper	22.5
Librarian	20.4
Textbook Co.	19.3
Community Gr.	7.5

Lack of equipment was mentioned as a barrier to more media education by one out of every four teachers. When asked which technical equipment they had available, teachers indicated that technical equipment was fairly readily available; they most commonly had access to a videocassette recorder (VCR) (91.2%), television monitor (75.9%), overhead projector (75.3%), and personal computer (69.7%). Table 16 shows the distribution of media equipment available to teachers in this study.

TABLE 16
Availability of Media Equipment

VCR	91.2%
TV Monitor	75.9
Overhead Proj.	75.3
Pers. Computer	69.7
Slide Proj.	68.1
16mm. Proj.	59.2
Video Camera	36.2
Photo Lab	2.1

Teachers were asked how frequently they used media equipment, whether their use was almost daily, once a week, several times a month, monthly, rarely or never. Their responses were scaled from 1 (almost daily) to 6 (never) and a mean use score for each piece of equipment was obtained. Table 17 shows these results. The mean rankings of media equipment use show that personal computers were used most frequently by these teachers, average use being between once a week and several times a month. Next in frequency were audio recorders, TV monitors, newspapers, and VCRs, each used slightly more than once a month. Video cameras and photo labs were rarely used, reflecting their general unavailability to teachers in this sample (see Table 16).

TABLE 17
Frequency of Media Equipment Use

	Mean Ranking:
Pers. Computer	2.77
Audio Recorder	3.58
TV Monitor	3.72
Newspapers	3.75
VCR	3.82
Overhead Proj.	4.44
16mm. Proj.	4.87
Slide Proj.	4.90
Video Camera	5.37
Photo Lab	5.95

Media is addressed fairly widely by teachers in this study; about half address media in four or more ways and most use several pieces of media equipment on a frequent basis. Most often, however, direct education about media is not included in these classroom activities. Rather, media is used to support instruction in other subjects. The next section of this report considers what teachers believe it is important for students to understand about media.

Goals and Values for Media Education

Two questions in the survey addressed teachers' preferred goals for media education. The first asked what they thought the most important things for students to understand about media were, while the second asked how useful time spent with different media is to students' education.

The question regarding what is most important for students to understand about media was open-ended so that respondents could respond without an imposed set of choices. Their responses fell into eight broad categories:

> **A Window on the World:** Media is a learning tool and a source of information. As a supplement, it enriches the learning process. Media offers an opportunity to receive global information through indirect experience.
>
> **The Need for Critical Thinking:** Skills that are important include how to question content; to think about why content is presented in a particular way; to relate content to structure; methods to use ancillary sources of information to check and compare media presentations; how to recognize values embedded in media content and to distinguish between

good and bad values encountered in media.

Content is Subjective: Media distorts content; some content is left out and some emphasized. Information is biased; opinion is presented as fact.

Self-Regulating Media Use: How to choose useful programming; how to use media as a supplementary activity; how to have an active rather than a passive experience and know the difference; choosing appropriate programming for age.

Telling Fact from Fiction: Telling fact from opinion, entertainment from news, real people and situations from stereotypes; an awareness that media imparts a sense of reality, but that its portrayals are not real.

How Media Works: How each medium works; how media work together; recognizing the manufactured components of media; knowing the names of production values; deconstructing the media into its basic elements; knowing how to use the media to produce content; the role of media in society.

Media Sells Products and Ideas: How to recognize the commercial influence; distinguishing ads from other content; separating the products from the emotional appeal of advertising; awareness of Madison Avenue tactics, public relations tactics and the image-making industries. Awareness that media delivers audiences/subscribers to advertisers.

Media Can Be Hypnotic: Electronic media is hypnotic and stunts learning and development. Media is addictive. An awareness that subliminal messages are sometimes embedded in content.

Up to two responses for each teacher were recorded.

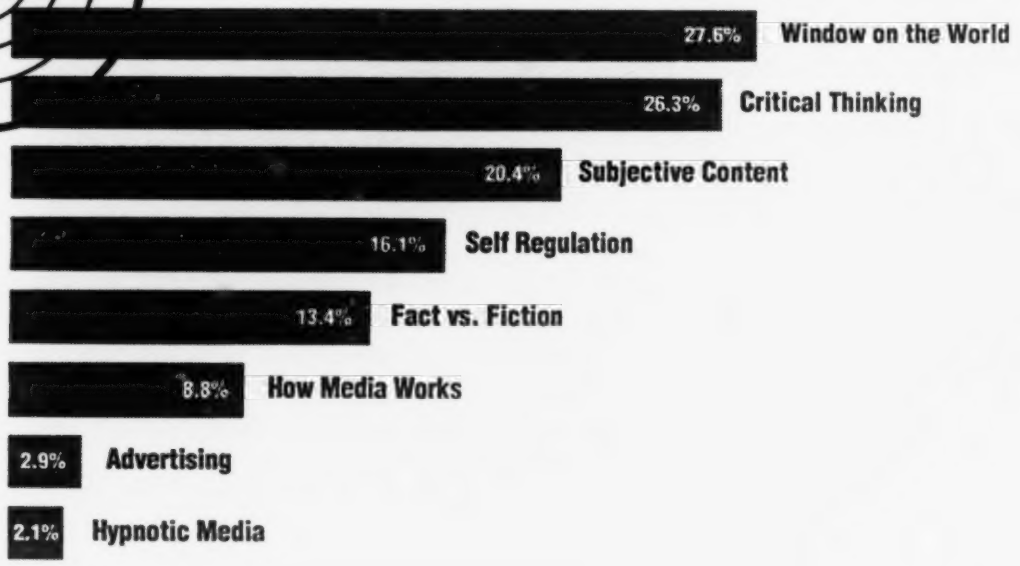
Table 18 displays the distribution of responses from the sample regarding what they felt it was important for students to understand about the media.

TABLE 18
Important Things for Students to Understand about Media

Window on World	27.6%
Crit. Thinking	26.3
Subjective Content	20.4
Self-Regulation	16.1
Fact vs. Fiction	13.4
How Media Works	8.8
Advertising	2.9
Hypnotic Media	2.1

TEACHERS' VIEW:

Important Things for Students to Understand about Media



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Teachers were most likely to mention the window on the world function of the media (27.6%), the need for critical thinking skills (26.3%) and the subjectivity of content of the media (20.4%) as important skills for students to learn. Generally, teachers were least likely to mention the possible hypnotic nature of the media (2.1%) or understanding advertising (2.9%) as important goals for media education to address. Since teachers perceive students as generally skilled at distinguishing ads from program content, this latter finding may not be surprising.

Public school teachers were significantly more likely than parochial school teachers to believe that important goals of media education were to understand the subjectivity of media content and how media works. Parochial school teachers were significantly more likely than public school teachers to stress the importance of teaching students to distinguish fact from fiction, as seen in Table 19.

TABLE 19
Goals for Media Education by Type of School

	Parochial	Public	Signif.
Window on the World	26.4%	28.8%	.6010
Crit. Thinking	26.9	25.7	.7808
Content Subjectivity	13.7	26.7	.0019
Self-Regulation	15.9	16.2	.9379
Fact vs. Fiction	17.0	9.9	.0447
How Media Works	5.5	12.0	.0260
Advertising	2.7	3.1	.8221
Hypnotic Media	2.7	1.6	.4330

Teachers who incorporate media into their classroom teaching in a number of ways (media actives) were significantly more likely than other teachers to emphasize the window on the world function, need for critical thinking skills, and how media works as important learning goals for students, as seen in Table 20.

TABLE 20
Goals for Media Education by Teachers' Media Activity

	Low	High	Signif.
Window on World	21.7%	32.8%	.0166
Crit. Thinking	20.0	31.8	.0097
Content Subjectivity	20.6	26.2	.9296
Self-Regulation	13.7	18.2	.2412
Fact vs. Fiction	13.1	13.6	.8890
How Media Works	4.0	13.1	.0019
Advertising	1.7	4.0	.1851
Hypnotic Media	2.3	2.0	.8598

When asked to respond to which media were most useful to their students' education, teachers were most enthusiastic about newspapers and VCRs, somewhat enthusiastic about magazines, and least enthusiastic about television and cinema. The mean rankings given each of these media is shown below in Table 21, where one is highly useful and 4 is harmful. Generally, teachers were positive in their ratings of these media. The least useful medium--film--was ranked somewhat useful while the others were each rated between highly useful and somewhat useful.

TABLE 21
Teaching Ratings of Media Usefulness to Education

	Mean Ranking:
Newspapers	1.60
VCRs	1.60
Magazines	1.66
Television	1.89
Cinema	2.16

Teachers regard media as important to their students' education. They are most likely to emphasize the educational importance of media in discussing what it is important for students to understand about it, along with the need for critical thinking skills and an understanding of the media's gatekeeping function.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In years past, it was popular to portray teachers as disdainful toward and suspicious of mass media. Today, that picture appears to have changed. Teachers surveyed in this study revealed an open, enthusiastic and knowledgeable attitude toward mass media and a desire to incorporate media education into their classroom activities.

Findings from the study suggest the following guidelines for the development of media education materials:

1. Media education materials should be designed so that they may be stand-alone, but flexible enough that they may be incorporated into other subject areas. Information should be provided in the media curriculum about alternative content areas in which the materials might be usefully incorporated, in order to maximize the flexibility of potential use.

2. Media education materials developed should respond to perceived teacher needs and interests, yet not neglect key areas overlooked by teachers through possible lack of knowledge about media. For example, media education materials can be responsive to teacher interests by stressing the educational function of the media and critical thinking skills; once having "hooked" the teacher with these emphases, they may also emphasize how media works, an area teachers may not deem important because they are not fully aware of what it means and how it influences the messages we receive.

3. Because there is wide access to certain pieces of media equipment, e.g. VCRs, television monitors and personal computers, an innovative media education curriculum should strive to be as multi-media as possible to broaden its appeal and students' experiential learning.

On the contrary, teachers generally lack easy access to photography labs and video cameras. Thus, student production activities might be included as optional activities rather than mandated ones.

4. Since lack of time and lack of materials are the two key barriers to more media education, media education materials should be designed to be as stand-alone and easy to use as possible. This suggests, for example, detailed teaching plans to minimize teacher preparation time.

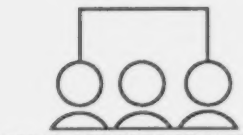
5. Since teachers in primary grades (K-3) rate student media understanding competencies and goals differently than do teachers in intermediate grades (4-6), the curriculum content should be designed to correspond to developmental differences in media use and understandings among

children as they mature.

6. Further study about media use and interests among teachers would be helpful. Topics for further study include how teachers value various ways in which students spend time with the media (e.g., news vs. entertainment); how teachers would like to use media in the classroom (e.g., the frequent use of personal computers may be largely for drill and practice, an instructional task which teachers may value but which other media may not accomplish as easily); and how middle school, junior high school and senior high school teachers would respond to the issues raised in this study.

Overall, there is a reasonable demand for media education materials and a clear lack of available materials presently on the market or known to teachers. Materials developed could be distributed through district media centers to interested teachers. Because there is a high interest among parochial school teachers in this study, special efforts to target parochial schools should be made in any dissemination and outreach efforts. Similarly, because the bulk of responding teachers have been in their positions for under five years, outreach efforts might focus on new teachers through pre-service and in-service training programs.

APPENDIX A
THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT



STRATEGIES FOR MEDIA LITERACY

Dear Teacher,

Strategies for Media Literacy has received a grant from the Skaggs Foundation in Oakland to explore the development of media education materials. These materials will be available to schools within the Bay Area and elsewhere.

In order to develop materials that will meet the needs of teachers like yourself, we need to know more about how you and your students use media. Would you help us, please, by completing this brief questionnaire?

Only a small sample of teachers in the entire Bay Area has been asked to repond to this survey, so **your** opinion is **very** important.

As a special thank you, we are mailing you a complimentary issue of the Strategies for Media Literacy newsletter. If you would like, we'd be happy to include you on the Strategies for Media Literacy newsletter mailing list—just fill in your name and address on the final page to continue receiving this FREE educational newsletter.

Please return the completed questionnaire by by folding and taping it so that the stamped, self-addressed side is visible and dropping it in the mail.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Tyner
Executive Director

STRATEGIES FOR MEDIA LITERACY
Needs Assessment Questionnaire

1. Which media do you think your students use the most often? Please rank order the following media, using a "1" for most frequently used, a "2" for next most frequently used, etc.

For Coding Purposes Only Do Not Write In Shaded Areas

___ Newspapers c1___
___ Television c2___
___ Radio c3___
___ Records c4___
___ Video/Computer Games c5___
___ Magazines c6___
___ Movies c7___

2. In your opinion, do most of your students spend___too much, ___just the right amount, or ___ not enough time engaged in using media? c8___

3. What do you think are the most important things for students to understand about the media? c9-10___

4. How do you address students' media use in your classroom? (Check as many as apply).

___ as a formal subject itself c11___
___ as part of another subject, like language arts or social studies c12___
___ through spontaneous discussions, which have included c13___
  ___ role of mass media in society c14___
  ___ general TV viewing c15___
  ___ role of advertising in media c16___
___ through assignments using
  ___ newspapers or magazines c17___
  ___ TV or radio c18___
___ through the use of technical equipment in the classroom c19___
___ other (please describe briefly) c20___

___ do not address students' media use c21___

5. Would you prefer to address students' media use ___ more often (GO TO QUESTION 6) or less often (GO TO QUESTION 7)? c22___

6a. If you would prefer to address media MORE OFTEN, how would you prefer to address it?

___ as a formal subject itself c23___
___ as part of another subject like language arts or social studies c24___
___ through spontaneous discussions, which have included c25___
  ___ role of mass media in society c26___
  ___ general TV viewing c27___
  ___ role of advertising in media c28___
___ through assignments using
  ___ newspapers or magazines c29___
  ___ TV or radio c30___
___ use of technical equipment in the classroom c31___
___ other (please describe briefly) c32___

b. Where do most of your media education resources come from?

___ Textbook companies c33___
___ ITV Office/Media Center c34___
___ Community Groups c35___
___ Newspaper Agencies c36___
___ Librarians c37___
___ Myself c38___
___ Other: (Please describe:) c39___

c. What prevents you from incorporating more media education into the classroom?

___ Lack of time c39-40
___ Objections from administration ___
___ Objections from parents
___ Lack of equipment
___ Lack of training
___ Lack of materials
___ Other (Please describe:)

7.If you would prefer to address it LESS OFTEN, why? c41-42__

__ Don't think it's appropriate for classroom
__ Don't feel competent in this area
__ Not enough time
__ Lack of materials
__ Other (Please describe:)

8. How useful would you say time spent with media is to your students' education?

	Highly Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful	Harmful	
Television	__	__	__	__	c43__
Videotapes/VCR	__	__	__	__	c44__
Newspapers	__	__	__	__	c45__
Magazines	__	__	__	__	c46__
Cinema	__	__	__	__	c47__

9. How competent would you say most of your students are in the following areas?

	Highly Competent	Somewhat Competent	Slightly Competent	Not at all Competent	
Choosing media content	__	__	__	__	c48__
Creating media content	__	__	__	__	c49__
Limiting media use	__	__	__	__	c50__
Analyzing program values	__	__	__	__	c51__
Distinguishing program content from reality	__	__	__	__	c52__
Distinguishing ads from other content	__	__	__	__	c53__
Identifying values in media content	__	__	__	__	c54__
Using technical equipment VCR	__	__	__	__	c55__
Record player	__	__	__	__	c56__
Tape recorder	__	__	__	__	c57__
Radio	__	__	__	__	c58__
Television	__	__	__	__	c59__

10. Which of the following types of equipment do you have available for classroom use? c78-80__

__ (c60) VideocassetteRecorder (VCR)
__ (c61) Videotape camera/recorder
__ (c62) Television monitor
__ (c63) 16mm Projector
__ (c64) Audiotape Recorder
__ (c65) Photography Lab
__ (c66) Slide Projector
__ (c67) Overhead Projector
__ (c68) Personal Computer

11. How often do you use the following equipment in your classroom?

	Almost Daily	Once A Week	Several times a Month	Monthly	Rarely	Never	
VCR	___	___	___	___	___	___	c1___
Video camera/recorder	___	___	___	___	___	___	c2___
TV monitor	___	___	___	___	___	___	c3___
16 mm projector	___	___	___	___	___	___	c4___
Audio Recorder	___	___	___	___	___	___	c5___
Photography Lab	___	___	___	___	___	___	c6___
Slide projector	___	___	___	___	___	___	c7___
Overhead projector	___	___	___	___	___	___	c8___
Personal computer	___	___	___	___	___	___	c9___
Newspapers	___	___	___	___	___	___	c10___

12. What grade(s) do you teach? _____ c11___

13. At which school do you teach? _____ c12-13___

14. How long have you been teaching? _____ years c14___

15. Are you_____ male or _____ female? c15___

c78-80___

16. If you would be interested in discussing media education in depth, please give us your name, address, telephone number and the best time to reach you:

17. If you would like to receive the **free** STRATEGIES FOR MEDIA LITERACY newsletter, please write your name and address here:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH! Please return this questionnarie to Strategies for Media Literacy, 946 Noe Street, San Francisco, CA 94114 © SML 1988

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END

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March 21,1991